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ABSTRACT

There are three very important factors that contribute substantially to urban fiscal problems in providing educational services. First, at the same time that the tax base for the cities' services is being eroded, the cities' residents are in need of and demanding greater expenditures for health services, welfare, sanitation, transportation, public housing, and all the other services required by an urban population. As a result, a smaller proportion of the city budget is available for public education than is available for educating the children in wealthier communities. Second, city education budget items are more costly than such items are elsewhere. Third, the socioeconomic characteristics of the urban school population require greater expenditure than other school populations. The combination of these factors results in less education per dollar in the city than in suburban or rural areas. (Author/IRT)

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EDUCATIONAL CHALLENGES

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PUBLIC EDUCATION ACROSS THE COUNTRY IS IN FINANCIAL TROUBLE. SCHOOL BOARDS IN MOST COMMUNITIES ARE FACED WITH INCREASED DEMANDS FOR EDUCATIONAL SERVICES, HIGHER COSTS AND HIGHER SALARIES. AT THE SAME TIME, TAXPAYERS ARE REFUSING TO VOTE ADDITIONAL SUPPORT FOR THEIR SCHOOLS, FEDERAL AID TO EDUCATION IS NOT INCREASING, AND STATE GOVERNMENTS HAVE FOUND NO WAY TO HELP WITH THE MONEY PROBLEMS.

WHILE THESE PROBLEMS EXTEND ACROSS CITY BOUNDARIES INTO SUBURBAN AND RURAL AREAS, NO PLACES ARE AS THREATENED AS THE LARGEST CITIES OF THE NATION. NEW YORK, LOS ANGELES, CHICAGO, DETROIT -- ALL ARE SUFFERING FROM OVERDEVELOPED NEEDS AND UNDERDEVELOPED AND DWINDLING FUNDS.

URBAN FISCAL PROBLEMS ARE OVERWHELMING FOR A NUMBER OF REASONS. THE MAJOR EFFECT SEEMS TO HAVE COME FROM A GRADUAL SHIFT IN POPULATION THAT HAS LEFT CITIES INHABITED BY A LARGE PROPORTION OF LOW-INCOME OR UNEMPLOYED MINORITY GROUP RESIDENTS WHO ARE IN GREATER NEED OF SPECIAL SERVICES INCLUDING EDUCATION, THAN ANY OTHER GROUP OF PEOPLE IN THIS COUNTRY. IT IS AS THOUGH CITIES HAVE SAID "GIVE ME YOUR TIRED, YOUR POOR, YOUR HUDDLED MASSES YEARNING TO BREATHE FREE" AND NOW THAT THEY HAVE COME AND STAYED AND HAVE BORNE CHILDREN, THE CITY CAN NO LONGER ADEQUATELY SUPPORT THEM OR EDUCATE THEM, AND THEY ARE CERTAINLY NOT BREATHING FREE.

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THERE IS AN ADDITIONAL PROBLEM THAT LARGE CITIES FACE: THE DESERTION OF COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL ACTIVITIES THAT FORMERLY HELPED TO PROVIDE A TAX BASE THAT AIDED IN THE SUPPORT OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS. AS A RESULT, THE PRIMARY SUPPORT FOR URBAN EDUCATION HAS BECOME THE PROPERTY TAX. BUT THE GROWTH IN URBAN EXPENDITURES HAS FAR EXCEEDED THE SLOW RATE OF GROWTH IN THE URBAN PROPERTY TAX BASE. A RECENT STUDY SHOWS THAT IN THE YEARS BETWEEN 1930 AND 1960, PER PUPIL EDUCATIONAL EXPENDITURES ROSE THREE TIMES AS FAST AS PROPERTY VALUES. THIS IS CONTINUING.

BUT WAIT, THERE IS EVEN MORE. AT THE SAME TIME THAT THE TAX BASE OF SUPPORT FOR THE CITIES' SERVICES IS BEING ERODED, THE CITIES' RESIDENTS ARE IN NEED OF AND DEMANDING GREATER EXPENDITURES FOR HEALTH SERVICES, WELFARE, SANITATION, TRANSPORTATION, PUBLIC HOUSING AND ALL OF THE OTHER SERVICES REQUIRED BY A HIGH-COST URBAN POPULATION. THUS, A SMALLER PROPORTION OF THE CITY BUDGET IS AVAILABLE FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION THAN IS AVAILABLE FOR EDUCATING THE CHILDREN IN WEALTHIER COMMUNITIES.

THERE ARE TWO MORE VERY IMPORTANT FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE SUBSTANTIALLY TO URBAN FISCAL PROBLEMS IN PROVIDING EDUCATIONAL SERVICES. THERE ARE, FIRST, THE HIGHER COST OF CITY EDUCATION BUDGET ITEMS, AND SECOND, THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE URBAN SCHOOL POPULATION. THIS COMBINATION RESULTS IN LESS EDUCATION PER DOLLAR IN THE CITY THAN IN THE SUBURB OR RURAL AREAS.

WE ALL KNOW THAT SUCH HIGH-COST ITEMS AS TEACHERS'SALARIES, FOR EXAMPLE, KEEP THE URBAN EDUCATION BUDGET SOMEWHERE CLOSE TO

THE SKY. URBAN TEACHERS COMMAND HIGH PAY NOT ONLY BECAUSE OF AGGRESSIVE UNION TACTICS, BUT ALSO BECAUSE THEY TEND TO HAVE MORE SENIORITY THAN TEACHERS IN OTHER PLACES. ADMINISTRATORS AND OTHER EDUCATION PERSONNEL IN THE CITIES COMMAND HIGHER SALARIES AS WELL.

URBAN CHILDREN ARE MORE OFTEN POOR, HANDICAPPED, NONWHITE, FOREIGN-BORN, NON-ENGLISH SPEAKING, AND FROM FAMILIES WITH FEWER AVERAGE YEARS OF SCHOOLING THAN CHILDREN LIVING ELSEWHERE. CONCENTRATED AMONG CITY CHILDREN ARE THOSE WHO HAVE TRADITIONALLY BEEN VICTIMS OF POVERTY AND PREJUDICE. EDUCATION FOR THESE CHILDREN NECESSARILY MUST HAVE A HIGHER PRICE TAG. IT MUST INCLUDE COMPENSATORY ASSISTANCE IN READING AND MATH; ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE; SPECIAL CLASSES FOR THE EMOTIONALLY AND PHYSICALLY HANDICAPPED; SUMMER RECREATION PROGRAMS; SUMMER ACADEMIC PROGRAMS; VOCATIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS; ADULT EDUCATION; SUPPLEMENTARY NUTRITIONAL PROGRAMS; PRESCHOOL CLASSES; AND SPECIAL TRAINING OF ALL KINDS FOR TEACHERS.

THE PAST THREE YEARS HAVE BEEN ESPECIALLY DIFFICULT ONES FOR EDUCATION AT ALL LEVELS AND IN ALL SECTORS. RISING COSTS, THE ENERGY CRISIS AND THE FALLING STOCK MARKET HAVE HAD A DISASTROUS EFFECT ON ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY AS WELL AS POST SECONDARY SCHOOLS AND TO TOP IT ALL OFF, ENROLLMENTS HAVE BEGUN TO DROP. IN HIGHER EDUCATION, COLLEGES ARE DESPERATELY COMPETING FOR DWINDLING NUMBERS OF STUDENTS WHO CAN AFFORD THE TUITION OR CAN OBTAIN ENOUGH FINANCIAL AID TO GET THROUGH. AFTER SEVERAL YEARS OF INCREASES,

THE NUMBER OF BLACKS ENROLLED IN HIGHER EDUCATION HAS BEGUN TO DECLINE DISPORPORTIONATELY. TO ADD TO THESE PROBLEMS, THERE IS THE LACK OF CONFIDENCE AND PUBLIC SCRUTINY LATELY BEING APPLIED TO MOST INSTITUTIONS IN THIS COUNTRY, ESPECIALLY GOVERNMENT OPERATED ONES.

CHRISTOPHER JENKS HAS RAISED A QUESTION -- "DOES EDUCATION MAKE A DIFFERENCE?" WE BELIEVE IT DOES, BUT IN A MARKETPLACE OF DIMINISHING JOB OPPORTUNITIES, EVEN THOSE WHO OPPOSE HIS THESIS ARE BEGINNING TO SEE THAT A COLLEGE DEGREE DOESN'T NECESSARILY MEAN A JOB, ALTHOUGH FOR VERY DIFFERENT REASONS FROM JENKS'.

THE COMPETITION FOR DOLLARS GOING TO DOMESTIC PROGRAMS IS EATING INTO EDUCATION DOLLARS AT ALL LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT. HOUSING PUBLIC SAFETY, PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION -- ARE ALL MAKING INCREASED DEMANDS FOR FUNDS, PARTICULARLY IN THE CITIES. THE NEW SYSTEMS FOR FINANCING PUBLIC EDUCATION HAVE NOT AS YET BEEN TESTED AND FOUND SUCCESSFUL AND PROBABLY WON'T ADD TO THE $68 BILLION A YEAR NOW BEING SPENT FOR ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION, BOTH PUBLIC AND PRIVATE, WHICH IS STILL NOT ENOUGH TO PROPERLY EDUCATE AMERICA'S CHILDREN.

THE CHANGING ATTITUDES, AMONG EDUCATORS AS WELL AS THE PUBLIC, TOWARD LEARNING, HOW TO TEACH, AND WHAT TO DO ABOUT EVER-DECREASING TEST SCORES, HAVE BROUGHT AN ATMOSPHERE OF UNCERTAINTY AND A LACK OF DIRECTION TO ~~THE~~ many classrooms. ~~AND~~ IN NEW YORK CITY, THE PROBLEMS OF THE CITY, ITSELF, BURDEN THE CONCEPT OF AND IMPLEMENTATION OF DECENTRALIZATION AND MAKE THE SUCCESSES OF COMMUNITY

SCHOOL DISTRICTS DIFFICULT TO COME BY. BUT, EDUCATION, IT MUST BE MADE CLEAR, IS AN ANTI-INFLATIONARY PROCESS. THE SCHOOLS HAVE BECOME VICTIMS OF, NOT CONTRIBUTORS TO, INFLATION.

A DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY DEPENDS UPON THE INTELLIGENCE AND WISDOM OF THE MASS OF THE PEOPLE TO KEEP THE COUNTRY MOVING. A GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE, BY THE PEOPLE AND FOR THE PEOPLE NECESSARILY DEPENDS UPON THE PEOPLE'S JUDGMENT TO MAKE DECISIONS THAT AFFECT THE GROWTH OF THE COUNTRY. IN AMERICA; WE HAVE DELEGATED TO THE SCHOOLS THE RESPONSIBILITY TO TRAIN THE MINDS OF THOSE WHO WILL CONTINUE TO BE THE GUARDIANS OF THIS SOCIETY. WE HAVE A STRONG COMMITMENT TO PUBLIC EDUCATION. TO SEE PUBLIC EDUCATION BROKEN UP INTO SECTARIAN AND, THEREFORE, POSSIBLY ANTAGONISTIC COMPARTMENTS WITHIN OUR SOCIETY WEAKENS THE FABRIC OF THE COMMON SCHOOL EDUCATIONAL BASIS ON WHICH THIS NATION WAS FOUNDED. THE TRUTH OF THE MATTER IS THAT OUR LARGE CITIES ARE NOT GOING TO SURVIVE UNLESS WE HAVE A ~~PESONABL~~Reasonable SYSTEM OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS THAT PEOPLE HAVE CONFIDENCE IN AND ONE OF THE WAYS WE BUILD A REASONABLE SYSTEM OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS IS BY PUTTING KIDS IN THEM AND TEACHING THEM.

WHY IS OUR EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM NOT RESPONSIVE TO THE DEMANDS OF OUR SOCIETY? WHY DOES OUR EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM CONTINUE TO BE SO RELUCTANT IN IMPLEMENTING NEW POLICIES WHICH WOULD EFFECT POSITIVE CHANGE AND MEET THE DEMANDS OF THE PEOPLE? WHO ARE THE KEEPERS OF THE EDUCATIONAL POLICY ESTABLISHMENT?

THE VAST MAJORITY OF THE PUBLIC IN OUR NATION LIVE BY A

FAMILIAR VISION OF OUR PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND THEY DO BELIEVE THAT OUR SCHOOLS HAVE TRADITIONALLY FULFILLED A DUAL FUNCTION -- PREPARING YOUNG PEOPLE FOR A CAREER IN ADULT LIFE AND SERVING AS TRANSMITTERS TO THE CULTURE.

TODAY'S EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM ARE IN MOST CASES RELATED TO CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION. AN EDUCATOR IS CONCEIVED OF AS ONE WELL VERSED IN ONE DISCIPLINE OR ANOTHER WITH A DEGREE OF SOPHISTICATION ABOUT HIS MIND. THE TRUE EDUCATOR ATTEMPTS TO ORIENT HIS TEACHINGS TOWARDS THE LIFE SITUATION OF THE SOCIETY IN WHICH THE STUDENT WILL LIVE BUT THIS CONCEPT INVOLCES A REAL UNDERSTANDING OF THE NATURE OF THE PRESENT SOCIETY: THE TRUE EDUCATOR WILL ALWAYS ENCOURAGE HIS STUDENTS NOT TO BE SATISFIED WITH WHAT THEY HAVE ACHIEVED.

PARENTS-TEACHERS AND SUPERVISORS SHOULD FORM A COALITION AND DEMAND AN EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM THAT SERVES CHILDREN. TODAY, CHILDREN ARE PROCESSED AND THEY TEND TO BE DEALT WITH IN TERMS OF HOMOGENEITY; THERE IS A NEED FOR MORE HUMANITY IN MANY OF OUR SCHOOLS AND MORE SERIOUS CONCERN FOR THE EMOTIONAL LIVES OF THE CHILDREN THAN WE PRESENTLY HOLD.

WE MUST RECOGNIZE THAT many of OUR COMMUNITY SCHOOL BOARDS WERE HANDED A FAILING SCHOOL SYSTEM AND IT NOW BECOMES THEIR RESPONSIBILITY ALONG WITH THE PARENTS TO HELP TO FEED THE CHILDREN'S MINDS AS WELL AS THEIR BODIES. THE THRUST FOR COMMUNITY CONTROL IS THE ONE MOST IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENT THUS FAR IN THE TRANSMUTATION OF BLACK AND PUERTO RICAN LOCAL INDIGENOUS POWER FROM RHETORIC INTO A FORCE FOR EFFECTIVE SOCIAL CHANGE. A BUSINESS HAS TO SHOW RESULTS OR IT BECOMES BANKRUPT; IT HAS TO BE ACCOUNTABLE. IF A

BUSINESS WERE RUN THE WAY MANY OF OUR SCHOOLS ARE OPERATING, IT WOULD HAVE GONE BANKRUPT A LONG TIME AGO.

THE URBAN CHILD EXPERIENCE FAILING IN READING AND OTHER ACADEMIC SKILLS BECAUSE THE QUALITY OF HIS LIFE OFTEN LACKS THE SOCIAL MOURISHMENT NECESSARY TO DEVELOP A CURIOSITY FOR LEARNING AND DOING. THE EFFECTS OF HAVING A HERITAGE OF SLAVERY AND OPPRESSION HAVE PLAGUED MANY BLACK CHILDREN WITH POVERTY, LOW SKILLED PARENTS AND DEEP ROOTED FEELINGS OF INSECURITY. THE ENDLESS ASSAULT OF TELEVISION, RADIO AND NOISES ATTACKS THE SENSES OF THE URBAN BLACK CHILD AND WEAKENS HIS ATTENTION SPAN, INTERFERES WITH LISTENING ABILITY AND DEPRESSES HIS DESIRE TO COMMUNICATE WITH OTHERS. ADDED TO THIS NOISE AND CONFUSION IN HIS DAILY ENVIRONMENT ARE THE PROBLEMS OF LIVING TOO NEAR TO MANY PEOPLE AND BEING TOO POOR TO ESCAPE INTO ANOTHER SETTING. THE SCHOOL THEN BECOMES IN MANY INSTANCES A PART OF A HOSTILE WORLD THAT OFFERS LITTLE MEANING TO THE CHILD WHO LACKS A PATH TO FOLLOW IN SEARCH OF A MEANINGFUL FUTURE. IT IS DIFFICULT FOR THE CHILD TO BELIEVE READING AND STUDY WILL PRODUCE REAL DIFFERENCES IN HIS LIFE.

SCHOOLS IN URBAN AREAS DO NOT PLAN EFFECTIVELY FOR THE PROVISION OF INCREASED COMMUNICATION AMONG CHILDREN AND ADULTS AND BETWEEN CHILDREN OF DIFFERENT AGE LEVELS. CRASH PROGRAMS DESIGNED TO TEACH READING BY MACHINES THAN THROUGH TEACHER-INDIVIDUAL METHODS DO NOT PRODUCE SIGNIFICANT GAINS IN READING LEVELS. THIS IS EXPECTED BECAUSE ELECTRONIC EQUIPMENT CAN NOT RESPOND TO A

VARIETY OF THOUGHTS WHICH THE LEARNING OF NEW WORDS TRIGGER IN CHILDREN. IN READING LABORATORIES, CHILDREN LEARN WORDS BUT OFTEN FAIL TO RELATE THESE WORDS TO OTHER GROWTH EXPERIENCES.

SINCE THESE WORDS ARE LEARNED INISOLATION FROM OTHER EXPERIENCES, THEY ARE SOON FORGOTTEN. THE LEARNER CANNOT USE THEM EFFECTIVELY IN HIS SPEECH AND WRITING. THE SCHOOL IN THE URBAN AREAS ARE SEEKING FOR MAGIC METHODS TO TEACH THE BASIC SKILLS AND TO DATE NO SUBSTITUTE HAS BEEN FOUND FOR THE WARM, COMPETENT TEACHER WHOSE CLASS IS SMALL ENOUGH TO PERMIT INDIVIDUALIZED INSTRUCTION FOR THE STUDENTS. STUDENTS WOULD PROFIT MORE FROM AN INCREASE IN TEACHER SERVICE THAN FROM THE TALKING TYPEWRITER. EDUCATIONAL GADGETS ARE NOT TO BE COMPLETELY ELIMINATED; THEY CAN BE VALUABLE TEACHING AIDS WHEN USED TO STIMULATE AND SUPPLEMENT THE LESSONS PRESENTED BY THE TEACHER. THEY CANNOT REPLACE THE TEACHER BECAUSE HUMAN BEINGS ARE STILL THE BEST TEACHERS FOR OTHER HUMAN BEINGS.

Older TRADITIONAL EDUCATORS ARE NOT NOTED FOR THEIR WILLINGNESS TO CREATE CHANGE; THEY HAVE TO UNDERSTAND THE NEED FOR A BUILT IN MOTIVATION SYSTEM THAT CAN MAKE STUDENTS WANT TO LEARN AND READ. ONE REASON THAT STUDENTS ARE NOW GETTING INTO JUNIOR AND SENIOR HIGH SCHOOLS WITH READING HANDICAPS IS BECAUSE THEY HAVE NO INTEREST IN THEIR SCHOOL WORK. HOWEVER, IF A PRACTICAL EDUCATION CONTAINS AREAS THAT STUDENTS ARE INTERESTED IN, WE COULD USE IT FOR READING MOTIVATION. IF A YOUNGSTER IS INTERESTED IN AUTO REPAIR, WE COULD TEACH HIM TO READ WITH AUTO REPAIR MANUALS. WE

MUST GIVE TO STUDENTS SKILLS, THINGS THEY CAN DO TO GIVE A PERSON CONFIDENCE SO THAT THEY CAN COPE WITH THE REAL WORLD.

THE TIME FOR RATIONALIZING IS WELL BEYOND US; WE HAVE ALL TOO OFTEN MADE THE CRY THAT AS TEACHERS OUR POWER IS MINIMIZED BY OUR PRINCIPALS; AS PRINCIPALS BY OUR SUPERINTENDENTS; AS SUPERINTENDENTS BY OUR SCHOOL BOARDS; AS SCHOOL BOARDS BY OUR LEGISLATURE. THE CRIES ARE TRUE, NO DOUBT, IN SOME INSTANCES, AND PERMIT US SOME JUSTIFICATON IN VIEWING OURSELVES AS BEING NOT TOTALLY AT FAULT: OUR EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM MUST NOT TAKE CREATIVE, SPONTANEOUS YOUNG PEOPLE AND MAKE THEM INTO DULL, STUPID ADULTS; SO OFTEN WE HAVE ~~POUND~~ Poured OUR YOUNG INTO A SYSTEM WHICH MAKES THEM DULL BUT WE HAD NEVER THOUGHT TO CHALLENGE THE SYSTEM. INSTEAD, WE BLAMED THE CHILDREN.

FINALLY, WE KNOW THAT INSTITUTIONS RESIST CHANGE AND IF WE FORGET THIS, ALL THAT WE BELIEVE IN AND STRIVE FOR WILL BE LOST. THE CHALLENGE IS HERE AND ALL OF US TOGETHER HAVE BEEN SO CONCERNED WITH TEACHING THAT WE ~~FORGET~~ have forgotten ABOUT CHILDRENS' LEARNING.

LET US TOGETHER FREE OUR CHILDREN'S MINDS AS WE FEED THEIR BODIES! FROM BOOKS COME TRUTH AND FREEDOM. THE CHILD BRINGS TO US HIS WHOLE BEING -- USE THIS WHOLE BEING AND EDUCATE THE CHILD. IF WE ARE REALLY TO AFFECT ETERNITY, LET IT BE TO OUR CREDIT.

"NO LONGER MUST WE MUTILATE THE SPIRITS OF MILLIONS OF AMERICAN CHILDREN EVERY DAY -- IT IS SURELY A SIN!"

Shirley Chisholm, M.C.
Delivered before the American Association of School Administrators
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